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Private firms assume maintenance responsibility over several UM buildings

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PRIVATE FIRMS ASSUME MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY
OVER SEVERAL UMI BUILDINGS

MISSOULA--

Total maintenance responsibility of the three newest buildings on the University of Montana campus has been assumed by private firms on a contract basis, according to J. A. Parker, director of University Facilities.

"Due to an increased workload with the addition of the new Library, Science Complex and Field House addition, and a reduction in staff because of budget limitations, we have concluded it may be economically advantageous to contract the work done," Parker said.

"We experimented with the idea last year when we had a local custodial firm service several of the buildings on campus and found that about the same quality of service could be maintained at a savings in cost," Parker added.

A program of weekly inspections under the direction of James Gordon, UMI Physical Plant mechanical engineer, is being established to insure quality control and provide close supervision.

Certain other maintenance work has been done in the past on a bid basis, including air conditioning and refrigeration repairs, mechanical and electrical work and custodial services.

Garbage disposal, laundry and elevator service also has been contracted for a number of years, Parker said.

Both local and national firms were involved in the maintenance contracts, and in those cases where nationally recognized firms performed the servicing, local people have been employed.

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"The change in operations did not result in any layoffs in our staff and at the same time created some jobs for area residents," Parker noted.

The reduction in staff experienced by the UM Physical Plant came through normal attrition in resignations and retirements.

The total maintenance of the three buildings, which began July 1, will include day-to-day cleaning and repairs but does not include any new construction or remodeling.

"We anticipate there may be some difficulties in making the transition from the old system to the new, but we hope to keep any problems to a minimum and have asked that the various departments located in the buildings advise us if there is anything being overlooked," Parker said.

"We will be constantly evaluating the new system to determine the effectiveness of the program and the savings in cost," Parker explained, adding that the change would be on a trial basis until a full evaluation has been completed.

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